I will only tell you, that, in general, this ſtone is very hard and heavy, and that the whole city of Naples is paved with it. I have ſeen ſome of it, that will bear a fine poliſh, and of which they make ſnuff-boxes.

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## XIX. *A Letter to the* Preſident, *concerning the* Hermaphrodite *ſhewn in* London: *by* James Parſons *M. D. F. R. S.*

SIR, Red-lion ſquare, March 14, 1750.

Read March 14. 1750. AS I find the Friench girl, now ſhewn at Ludgate as an hermaphrodite, makes ſome noiſe in town, and as the generality of the world are apt in this very caſe to take the erroneous ſide of the queſtion in giving their opinions about it, for want of having a proper knowlege of the parts, I have taken the liberty to trouble you with this letter, containing ſome account of the matter, which is intended to undeceive ſuch as are miſtaken about it.

She is now about eighteen years old, and the true deſcription of her *pudenda* is as follows:

What is miſtaken for a *penis* and has at firſt ſight cauſed the deception, is the *clitoris*, grown to an inordinate ſize. The prepuce of this is continued down on each ſide, to form the *nymphæ*: under theſe the natural *urethra* is in its proper place, as in all females; and juſt under this is a natural *vagina*. This *vagina* is concealed by a ſkin growing up from the *perinæum*, and continued to the *labium* of each ſide

ſide quite over it; which, if ſnipp'd with ſciſſars, would lay the orifice of the *vagina* bare, and ſhew the perſon a perfect female, having only this morbid ſize of the *clitoris*.

This is really the fact relating to the preſent ſubject; which any one may be ſatisfied of, by paſſing a finger down under this ſkin to the *perinæum*, and he will meet the orifice of the *vagina*, and find it as perfect as that of any other woman of the ſame age.

The *vagina* being thus cover'd, and the *clitoris* thus large, it is no great wonder, that ſhe ſhould at firſt ſight be taken for a male by the vulgar: but it would ſeem a little too careleſs in any of the faculty to be ſo deceiv'd. However if we do but conſider the following obſervations, we ſhall find it no ſuch ſtrange affair, as it now ſeems to the world: nor is it new, to find people imagine, that, ſince this miſtaken *penis* is imperforate, the *urethra* is preternaturally directed to appear under it, without conſidering it to be a true female *urethra*, in its natural place.

I had the honour, on the 30th of April, 1741, to lay before the Society ſeven or eight female *fætus's*, from about ſix to ſomewhat more than ſeven months growth. Each of theſe had its *clitoris* bigger in proportion than the preſent girl, or any other whom I have ever ſeen; which is the caſe with all female *fætus's*, during the greateſt part of the time of geſtation. And this is nature's common rule all over the world.

Now it is impoſſible, that ſo many hermaphrodites ſhould be formed at once, ſince we have ſo few inſtances

inſtances among the European nations of thoſe ſo reputed; tho' they are common enough in Aſia and Africa, in all thoſe places eſpecially, that are neareſt the equinoctial line, where the non naturals themſelves conduce much to the general relaxation of the ſolids in human bodies, and conſequently this unſeemly accretion of that part.

Now as the female *fœtus* increaſes in the *uterus* in a natural way, the neighbouring parts of the *pudenda* grow more in proportion than the *clitoris*, drawing away the integuments from it, whereby it becomes by degrees leſs conſpicuous; and at length, as the child grows up, it is ſhrunk between the *labia*, and remains always cover'd, as it is now the common appearance in our women. But when it continues its growth, together with the neighbouring parts in the ſame proportion, which all female *fœtus's* have it in, maintaining its firſt proportional ſize, the perſon, when grown up, is call'd by the vulgar an hermaphrodite ſince the natural ſtructure of this part is in a great meaſure like that of a *penis virilis*.

Nor is its largeneſs in a *fœtus* much to be wonder'd at, ſince there are other very ſimilar caſes in the ſame body, as the *gland thymus* and *glandulæ renales*; both which, as the child grows larger, diminiſh in their proportion.

Theſe *macroclitorideæ* are ſo numerous among many nations of *Aſia* and *Africa*, that the antients, Albucaſis eſpecially in his 71ſt chap. inform us of the neceſſary operation and method of cure, which he terms *cura tentiginis*, finding the part ſo call'd inconvenient from its largeneſs. Nor was this knowlege confin'd to men of ſcience alone amongſt the *Egyptians* and *Ethiopians*,

*Ethiopians*, and *Angolans*; for every parent knows, when the child has theſe parts longer than ordinary, and cut or burn them off, while girls are very young, and at the ſame time never entertain the leaſt notion of the exiſtence of any other nature beſides the true female, in thoſe children, who are thus deprived of that part.

The learned *De Graafe* was well acquainted with this, and gives his approbation of the operation, as highly neceſſary, as well as decent: " *eſtque hujus* " *partis chirurgia orientalibus tam neceſſaria quam* " *decora.*"

It has been ſaid too, that this girl in town has not the leaſt appearance of breaſts; but thoſe, who report this, muſt ſurely have never ſeen the breaſts of the women of any other nation but our own. On the contrary, ſhe has as large breaſts as any French girl of her age, and as good a nipple; whatever care they take to ſqueeze and compreſs them with her apparel. Beſides ſhe is a thin girl, and ſmall of her age; and really among our own young women, when they are ſpare, and ſmall in ſtature, it will be hard to find any with breaſts more conſpicuous than, if ſo much as, hers.

I have conſider'd this ſubject more at large in my *Critical Inquiry into the Nature of Hermaphrodites*, which the curious may ſee; and am, in the mean time, Sir,

Your moſt humble ſervant,

J. Parſons.